and the depth of his or her knowledge in this or that area. Various links, directing the recipient to the right area, play the undeniable role.

In general, intertextuality actualizes self-similar indexical and iconic connection of a text's parts with each other, a text with precedent texts (and what is more – precedent phenomena), and an author's texts on the content, structural and genre-stylistic peculiarities levels. However, this does not belittle the merits of each new text because every literary work, building up its own intertextual field, restructures all former cultural funds and creates its own cultural history. Moreover, by means of the establishing connections between a separate literary work with previously created texts intertextuality acts as an effective way of reflecting the sense forming process and provides the possibility of split-level interpretation, turning a postmodern text in non-linear semantic structure with the increasing sense entropy.

On the linguistic level, the intertextuality signals can be divided into several types. It can be the author's comment on the work peculiarities, links to various prototexts or other works of the same author. Thereafter, we can dwell upon the following varieties of intertextuality – hypertextuality, paratextuality, arhitextuality, intextuality.

Hypertextuality and paratextuality actualize intertextual relations on syntagmatic level and become the basis for horizontal

intertextuality which is realized while moving indication, which is expressed by the signals of intertextuality, on a new referent according to the principle of their adjacency when the folded prototext substitutes the whole text in the mind of the recipient. The special relationship between texts of the works of one writer is hypertextuality. The implementation of indexical relations in the framed neartextual space (title, subtitle, epigraph, preface, afterword, etc.) is treated as paratextuality. Hypertextual relations among all the texts of the author and paratextual relations of the certain work that organize intertextual frames by updating the relevant precedent phenomena allow us to determine the deeper meaning of each particular work of art and describe entire picture of the world view constructed by the author.

The transference of indication which is expressed by the signals of intertextuality on a new referent on the basis of their similarity leads

to realization of the so-called paradigmatic intertextuality in the form of architextual and intextual relations. Architextuality demonstrates the establishment of paradigmatic connections of text or its parts with a certain precedent genre. Iconic relations of similarity become the basis of stylization, the contrast leads to the genre characteristics parody. The actualization of text reminiscences (various quotes, allusions, and extensions), which form the vertical context of the recipient text, leads to the realization of intextual connections with various precedent phenomena. Practical analysis confirms that postmodern text composed of allusions, metaphors, stylizations, explicit or implicit polemics, secondary and sequential interpretations and reinterpretations of text, parody, "alien" text narration, multiple-in-one text collage, being the unit of postmodern discourse, transforms the increased citationality and reminiscence occurrence to the basis of postmodern writing.

To sum up, we note that intertextual multigenre and multidiscourse organization as the essence of postmodern poetics plays the role of marker belonging to a tradition of non-linear narrative.

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Розина Гунта
Кандидат филологических наук, Университет Латвии
НЕВЕРБАЛЬНОЕ ОБЩЕНИЕ И СПАСЕНИЕ РЕПУТАЦИИ: ОТ ТЕОРИИ К ПРАКТИКЕ

Аннотация

В статье рассмотрен феномен молчания в качестве ресурса невербального общения. Специалисты, занимающиеся прикладной лингвистикой утверждают, что использование молчания для общения может быть определено факторами нескольких категорий, одним из которых является спасение репутации. На сегодняшний день было предпринято множество исследований того, как носители языка используют молчание, тем не менее, только немногие из них рассматривали молчание в качестве стратегии спасения репутации. Таким образом, для того чтобы определить связь между спасением репутации и невербальным общением, автором было предпринято данное исследование. В рамках текущего исследования был проведен анализ молчания в качестве рабочей стратегии, применяемой в общении на английском языке лицами, не являющимися его носителями. Для этой цели были выбраны 4 группы лиц, не являющихся носителями английского языка. Была предпринята стратегия качественного исследования. В результате было обнаружено, что в тех случаях, когда целевой язык употребляется для общения, испытуемые попадают под влияние когнитивных и прагма-социальных факторов. Когда испытуемые применяют вербальное и невербальное общение, стратегия зависит он многих факторов, молчание является одним из них. Исследование показало, что молчание применяется для косвенной передачи информации, и часто используется в качестве стратегии сохранения репутации в общении на целевом языке. Использование молчания как стратегии коммуникации зависит от множества факторов и от конкретного человека, а также от цели общения.

Ключевые слова: невербальное общение, молчание, репутация, сохранение репутации.

Rozina Gunta
PhD, University of Latvia
INDIRECT COMMUNICATION AND FACE-SAVING FACTOR: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Abstract

The paper analyses silence as a non-linguistic resource for conveying indirect communicative acts. Applied linguists assert that the use of silence for communicative purposes might be determined by several categories of factors, the face-saving factor being one of them. So far, much research has been done to determine how the speakers of different languages use silence; however, only limited research on silence as a strategy for face saving can be identified. Thus, the current investigation was undertaken to explore the relationship between the face-saving factor and non-verbal communication where silence as a strategy for indirect interaction was applied. Within this framework, the study dealt with the analysis of silence as a workable

strategy that is often adopted in non-native speakers' communication in English. With this purpose, four focus groups of non-native speakers (NNSs) of English in Latvia were selected. The investigation was approached from the perspective of qualitative research, and it applied a case study as the research method. The study has acquired two types of findings. First, when the target language is applied for interactional purposes, NNSs of the English language are influenced by cognitive and pragma-social factors. Second, when NNSs adopt both aspects of language, i.e., verbal and non-verbal, for interaction, the strategy depends on numerous factors, silence being one of them. The study has demonstrated that silence is often applied to communicate information indirectly, and it is frequently used as a face-saving strategy in interaction in the target language. The use of silence as a communicative strategy depends on numerous factors in different non-native language users' settings and varies according to the focus of interactional purposes.

Keywords: indirect communication, silence, face, face-saving.

Introduction

The study discusses the importance of understanding silence as a face-saving strategy in non-native language users' speech community. It aims at examining how the phenomenon of silence, which is one of the nonverbal strategies applied by NNSs of Latvian and Russian origins, is used. In the current situation in Latvia, the English language is prioritized both by professionals who are to apply the language for instrumental purposes and by the language learners of different focus and age groups who master the language in academic settings in order to develop the communicative language competence. Consequently, the paper deals with the analysis of some of the related factors that demonstrate the increasing tendencies being observed when NNSs interact in the target language. To achieve the research aim, the study examines the use of *silence* as one of the means of indirect communication in NNSs classroom, views some of the seminal theories on *face-saving* factors, explores selected aspects of the use of silence in foreign language classroom and offers some interpretations of silence applied as a face-saving strategy from the perspective of pragmatics. The study has been based on investigating the communicative behaviour of four groups of language learners: a) dental practitioners who master the language for professional purposes in order to communicate with their patients of foreign origin, b) learners who do their academic studies at the University of Latvia and who do their professional studies in the Vocational School and at Riga Technical College.

Thus, the study has posed the following research question: How does silence function as a face-saving strategy when NNSs use the English language for communicative purposes in Latvia?

Theoretical Background of Study

The theoretical background of the present study is established considering selected theoretical contributions on investigation of *silence* as a strategy for indirect communication and it is backed up by the analysis of some of the seminal writings on *face-saving* that deal with the study of *face* when it is used to refer to the public image of a language user.

Silence - Strategy for Indirect Communication

Silence does not merely function as a 'background' to speech. It, in fact, is considered to be a complex, multifaceted and powerful element of human interaction. In recent years, there has been a growing research interest in exploring the role of silence in communication (e.g. Nakane, 2007). The recent study has demonstrated so far that the notion *silence* is used to refer to various phenomena, ranging from the absence of any noise to brief almost inaudible silences (pauses) within or between speech turns (Sifiniaou, cited in Jaworski, 1997, p. 63). Besides, silence can exist without speech, but speech cannot exist without silence. Silence establishes its meaning only in verbal or nonverbal contexts (Johannesen, cited in Jaworski, 1997, p. 44). Applied linguists have indicated that silence is not simply an absence of noise but it constitutes a part of communication that is as important as speech (e.g., Jaworski 1997; Sacks et al. 1974; Tannen & Saville-Troike 1985; Nakane, 2007, p. 5)

The contradictory nature of silence indicates its complex and context-dependent role in communication. Nakane (2007), for example, states that while the linguistic strategy of questioning in one-to-one communicative situations gives power to the questioner, the respondent can reverse the situation by refusing to give a response (Nakane, 2007, p. 9-10). Besides, silence can be, or can seem to be the result of personal choice; however, silencing involves choices made by other people as well as the choices prioritized by the speaker himself/herself. According to Thiesmeyer (2003), the action of silencing is accompanied by social, political, and cultural judgements of what is acceptable and unacceptable in a particular community (Thiesmeyer, 2003, p. 2).

Forms of Silence

According to Nakane (2007), silence can be represented via such forms as: a) intra-turn pauses, b) inter-turn (switching) pauses/gaps, c) turn-constituting silences with illocutionary force when the gap becomes a more extensive silence; this often can be interpreted as a 'silent response,' which itself can perform a speech act in an indirect manner, d) temporary silence of individuals who do not hold the floor in interaction, e) an individual's total withdrawal of speech in a speech event, f) silence of a group of participants when it is a constituent of social/religious events, g) discourse suppressed by a dominant force at various levels of social organisation or *hidden silence* (Nakane, 2007, p. 6). In addition, Blimes (1997) notes that *hidden silence* refers to what remains 'untold' in discourse, and is often associated with power. This type of silence does not have a recognisable 'form' itself, but it can be noticed or even 'created by the analyst' (Blimes 1994, p. 84). In Jaworski's (2000) terms, *hidden silence* can be characterised as 'an absence of something that we expect to hear on a given occasion, when we assume it is 'there' but remains unsaid' (Blimes, 2000, p. 113). 'An absence of information through censorship', as referred to by Jaworski and Galasiński (2000) regarding the Polish government, is an example of such silence (cited in Nakane, 2007, p. 6-7).

Walker (1985) states that switching pauses 'occurs at margins of speakers' *turns*', while inter-turn pauses 'take place during the utterance of a single speaker only' (Walker, 1985, p. 61). Sacks et al. (1974) list different types of silences in conversation from a conversation analytical perspective, such as: a) pause: silence within a single turn, b) gap: silence which occurs at a transition relevance place (TRP) where a speaker change is relevant, c) lapse: silence at a TRP where no one claims the floor and 'the ensuing space of non-talk constitutes itself as more than a gap' (Sacks et. al, 1974, p. 715).

Functions of Silence

Nakane, (2007) states that silence performs four functions, such as:

a) *a cognitive function* that is marked by pauses and hesitations; it is fulfilled for cognitive processing of language. Sugito (1991), for example, has examined the roles of pauses in understanding monologue in Japanese. His research results have demonstrated that, without having pauses, listeners experience considerable difficulties in understanding an ongoing talk and in interpreting it correctly. The scholar admits that pauses play a crucial role in achieving successful communication: they allow both the speaker to gain time for organising his/her thoughts and the listener- to have time for processing the information offered;

b) *a discursive function* that marks boundaries of discourse in order to indicate the meaning of sentences/ utterances in communication. Brown & Yule (1983) claim that units of speech defined by prosodic features, such as tones of voice, are often followed by pauses. Jaworski (1993) characterises the discursive function of pauses as 'defining the boundaries of utterance' (Jaworski, 1993, p. 12), and as 'marking boundaries as a prosodic feature of discourse' (cited in Saville-Troike, 1985);

c) *social functions* of silence are fulfilled a) when a social distance is maintained or negotiated, b) when impression management through a pause length, frequency and speed of talk is created, c) when conversational styles through a pause length, frequency, speed of talk and overlapping evolve, d) when social control through avoiding verbal interaction with specific individuals is established, e) when maintaining power through avoiding certain content of verbal expressions is demonstrated, f) when maintaining and reinforcing power relationship is established, g) when negotiating power, politeness strategies are carried out via positive and negative face saving factors to avoid face-threatening acts;

d) *affective functions* of silence can perform as a means of emotion management or can also play a role in the display of language users' emotions. Saunders (1985), for example, proves in his research that serious emotional conflicts can be avoided by the use of silence.

Silence –Strategy of Communicative Behaviour: Culture-Related Aspects

Liu (2002, p. 38) states that silence represents the strategy of a certain aspect of communicative behaviour and can be examined considering the following categories: a) prior learning experience or mental readiness to study, i.e. the cognitive factors, b) teaching styles, active participation as a course/subject requirement, equal opportunities to speak/perform during the language acquisition/production process, i.e. the pedagogical factors, c) motivation, positive attitude and positive learning/teaching environment, i.e. the affective factors, d) face-work, i.e. the pragma-cultural factors, e) communicative competence, the target language proficiency, prosody, i.e. the linguistic factors.

The scholar states that each of the above-mentioned categories is operated at three functional levels, such as a) a facilitative level, b) a debilitating level, c) a neutral level. It must be remarked that the three functional levels are interlinked. Thus, for instance, if a language user/learner possesses a high level of the foreign language proficiency, he/she is interested in the subject, and keeping silence could be a representation of a high motivation to find out as much as possible about the subject matter under discussion. Depending on the cultural background, keeping silence can be interpreted as respect paid to the speaker, because to be a good listener might be a representation of exceptionally high cultural values. Conversely, low language proficiency can result in poor classroom work, inattentiveness, disinterest into the subject matter and in distracted attention.

Another aspect that should be considered when exploring silence as communicative behaviour of non-native language users is their culture-specific characteristics. Hall (1992) acknowledges that cultures differ in their use of context to create the linguistic meaning; the scholar admits that cultures can be characterised considering the communication styles of the language users. These styles evolve in three dimensions, such as: time, space and context (Hall, 1992, p. 40-67). Boyacigileer et. al (2004) state that cultures are powerful social constructs (Boyacigileer et. al. 2004, p.99). For example, Europeans and Americans 'regard talk as desirable and use it for referential and social or affective purposes' (Liu, 2002, p. 39). Bruneu (1973) asserts that 'in Western cultures moments of silence and solitude are becoming rare' (Bruneu, 1973, p. 37). As regards Eastern cultures, they are 'characteristically silent: both general and lengthy interactive silences are common' (ibidem).

Thus, it can be assumed that the interpretation of silence differs from culture to culture. Manifestation of silence does not always mean that a person has nothing to say. Conversely, the meaning of silence, depending on the social context of communication, might mean: a) manner of speaking, b) social and cultural values, or habits, e.g. reaction to the outspokenness of a communication partner, c) manifestation of indirectness as a communication strategy, d) benefiting from listening to others to reach full understanding of what has been stated, e) respect paid to others due to their seniority or competence, f) self-protection, g) dominance or power in the social group, e.g. expressing agreement or disagreement. Besides, silence as a strategy bears an ambiguous nature. The interpretation of its meaning requires a culture-specific knowledge. Sobkowiak (1997) asserts that, depending on the interlocutor's culture-bound values, silence can be explained through the range of the following types: a) refraining from speech, b) absence of sound, c) withholding knowledge, d) failure to communicate, e) obviation or obscurity (Sobkowiak, 1997, p. 43).

Social-Norm View and Face-Saving View

To examine silence as a strategy of communicative behaviour in non-native language learners' speech community, the current study considers the theoretical writings on the *Social Norm View* (SNV) and on the *Face-Saving View* (FSV). As regards the SNV, it is a linguistic approach that states, characterizes and represents a historical understanding of linguistic politeness (Fraser, 1990). The norms of politeness were established as a codified system of linguistic behaviour in the 15th and 16th centuries, when they implied a rich variety of activities, such as: a) choice of sociably acceptable topics to discuss in public, b) choice of appropriate vocabulary, c) balanced usage of talk and silence, b) balance between talking and listening (Watts, 1992). The SNV is based on the assumption that each society and each culture establish a specified set of implicit and explicit rules, which underlie appropriate social behaviour in a particularized context of use. Barron (2002) asserts that consideration of these norms testify to 'one's *good manners* and *etiquette*, which make a proper conduct and tactful consideration of others' (Baron, 2002: 4).

As regards the *Face-saving View*, the concept of *face* should be considered; it is analysed in Brown and Levinson's *Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena* (Brown, Levinson, 1978). In 1987, the authors published a revised edition of the above-mentioned book *Politeness: some universals in language usage*. This is a seminal work in regard to the study of

politeness phenomena, because it offers a description of principles referring to cross-linguistic politeness.

It was argued in the work that a speaker and an addressee are expected to coordinate their linguistic activities to communicate their meanings in interaction. Besides, *social factors,* such as social distance between an addressee and a speaker, age and the context of communicative situation can act as constraints on the interpretation of an utterance. Some of the social factors can bear *external nature*, while some of them can bear *internal nature*. Factors being of external nature involve such aspects as interlocutors' social status, age, gender, and power. Factors being of internal nature comprise such aspects as the degree of friendliness, the mutual attitude between the speaker and the hearer, and alike. Thus, to consider the use of language that 'shows attention to social factors and explains the strong reactions provoked by failure to pay attention to them, the concept of *face* is commonly offered' (LoCastro, 2006, p. 110). Therefore, the concept *face* is used to denote the public image of a human being. Face occurs in interactions with other people, and this is one way in which the concept *face* differs from related concepts, such as self-image or self-esteem. Face does not refer to what one thinks of oneself, but it rather denotes what kind of image is established in interaction. Face is public in the sense that it is observable. It is social in the sense that it involves the actions of all the participants and not only the actions of the individual whose face is considered. Face is situated.

For example, we can adopt different identities in various interactions in the course of the day: we can be students at a university, customers to a shop or patients in a hospital. Therefore, losing or saving face has to do with our ability to stay in character and behave in the way that matches our expectations for our role. If someone is engaged in a scandal, he/she risks losing face. It means that some actions are face threatening, but some situations are threatening to a particular role. Thus, it is never only one's behaviour that sustains or loses face. It is the <u>meaning</u> of that behaviour that can save, threaten or lose one's face. Face evokes emotional reactions. We feel good when we are in face, and we feel bad when we are out of face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), each individual has a face of <u>two</u> distinct varieties:a positive face- the wish to be accepted and liked by others and a negative face- the wish that one's 'actions are unimpeded' (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 62). It means that every person wishes to be both appreciated and autonomous. These wishes are labelled as *face wants* or *face needs* by Brown and Levinson (1987). Any action that does not meet face needs or face wants poses a possible offence and is referred to as *a face- threatening act.* (FTA). The size of a face- threatening act depends on imposition, which involves culturally shared ideas about how many different acts impose on us or undermine our image. For example, in Latvian speech community, to ask a question of how much money one makes could be considered an intrusion to Latvians' privacy. However, in other cultural groups the same question would not be considered intrusive at all.

Thus, distance, specifically social distance, determines the relationship between the interlocutors. Power refers to the degree of relationship. Imposition establishes compulsory arrangements, activities forced on others. Grundy (1995) states that 'Distance+Power+Imposition is equal to the degree of face threat to be compensated by appropriate linguistic strategy' (Grundy, 1995: 135). Besides, it should be added that *face* is a symbolic feature that characterises interaction between the speaker and the hearer. It is considered to be a technical term to mark the public self-image people maintain. The term includes both social and emotional aspects. In addition, it comprises a person's expectations that his/her face needs will be recognized and acknowledged by others. Taking into account this theory, silence in non-native language users' community might be interpreted as face-saving strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the central aspect in their theory is 'the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 61).

Method

The present study was approached from the qualitative research perspective. It employed selected elements of quantitative study to interpret the statistical data acquired in the process of the investigation. To provide a detailed description of the instances under analysis, a case study was identified as the research type. As regards the study context, it was conducted in Latvia in two phases: a) during the autumn semester of 2012/2013 study year, and b) during the autumn semester of 2013/2014 study year.

Data Collection

Data collection procedure involved three research instruments: interviews with the target language learners to find out their language wants and needs; lengthy classroom observations to see how the target language is used for communicative purposes and a questionnaire that was filled in by the research participants to understand which strategies of communication are used in the language classrooms. After numerous classroom observations, a questionnaire addressing 20 different questions was spread among the research population in the autumn semester of 2012/2013 study year and in the autumn semester of 2013/2014 study year.

Classroom observations and interviews with the research participants indicated that the majority of them intentionally selected silence as a strategy for indirect communication in the target language classroom. This fact raised the research interest in the author of this paper. Thus, the designed questionnaire included closed-ended questions, the majority of them concentrating on a factor that could possibly relate to the use of silence as a strategy in the foreign language acquisition and production processes. The structure of the questionnaire was designed so that it enabled the author of this paper to obtain reliable data for the current study. The validity of the gained research results can be proved by a considerable number of the research population who participated in the study and shared their opinions on the subject-matter of the present analysis.

As regards the theoretical contributions that were taken into account to back up the interpretation of silence being one of the strategies used by the research participants for indirect communication within the framework of *face* theory, the following theoretical aspects were considered in the questionnaire: a) categories to analyse the reasons for manifestation of silence (Liu, 2002), b) culture-specific issues of the language learners (Sobkowiak, 1997), c) the ways of how individuals encode their face (Brown and Levinson), d) the belongness to a specified context culture (Hall,1992).

Research Population

The research population consisted of two focus groups. During the identified period of 2013/2014 study year, the focus group included the English language learners- dental practitioners in Latvia who are to apply the language for interactional purposes to communicate in English with the growing number of their foreign origin patients. During the study period of

2012/2013, the focus group involved Latvian and Russian origin students who acquire the English language for academic purposes in foreign language classrooms. As regards the age group of the research population, 20 dental practitioners formed the group 35+ and 73 learners of the tertiary and secondary levels referred to the group 18+ respectively. Concerning NNSs foreign language proficiency, the research participants' language ability was referred to B2-B1 levels, according to *Common European Framework of References for Languages* (2001) that is considered to be an officially accepted standard in Europe for grading an individual's foreign language competence. Besides, it was taken into account that the tertiary level students (the University of Latvia) specialise in Business and Modern Languages Programme; the secondary level students specialise in Engineering (Technical College and the Vocational School of Mechatronics and Wood Processing) The learners were informed that their answers would lay a foundation for a scientific article devoted to the issue of interpretation of silence as a strategy of indirect communication in the target language classroom. However, in order to avoid bias the students were not told how exactly the questions corresponded to the categories influencing the development of silence.

Results

The research data gathered proved that the action of silence is accompanied by cognitive, social and cultural judgements expressed by the target language users. Besides, it was revealed that as a strategy of communicative behaviour it manifests itself via cognitive, social, discursive and affective functions, according to the classification by Nakane (2007). Not only the silence factor but also the linguistic factors play a decisive role in NNSs communication. Essentially, it was pointed out as well that silence was used as one of the strategies of indirect communication with a purpose of saving the individual's face.

Cognitive Function of Silence

The cognitive function of silence is fulfilled for developing cognitive processing of the language (Nakane, 2007). The use of pauses, for example, establishes successful communication.

To determine how successful communication in the target language can be achieved, the following questions of the research interest were involved in the questionnaire: a) *Does your previous language learning experience affect your participation in the foreign language classroom discussions?*; b) Are *you usually more likely to answer the teacher's questions when you are familiar with the topic/theme of the discussion?* ; c) *Do you answer the teacher's questions when you feel shy to speak up in the classroom?*

Regarding the answers supplied to the first question (a) of the questionnaire, an increasing number of the respondents answered that their previous language learning experience does not affect their participation in the foreign language classroom discussions. In answer to this question, the majority of the dental practitioners stated that their previous language learning experience does not play a decisive role in the target language classroom. As they were engaged in the language studies to advance their foreign language proficiency, it was a strong motivational and contributory factor.

Only 32% of the tertiary level students and only 17% of the secondary level students reported that their participation in the target language classroom was not influenced by the previous learning experience. This could be explained by the fact that the tertiary level students having chosen modern languages as their speciality most likely had gained a positive language learning experience in their former language studies, which motivated them to continue with the target language studies at the University of Latvia. The former experience was seen as a challenging and helpful factor to advance the language proficiency during their academic studies. Regarding the students of Technical College and the Vocational School, they major in the area of engineering, thus, they consider that a high level of the foreign language proficiency is not necessarily their learning priority.

In reference to the second question (b) set in the questionnaire, most of the respondents confirmed that they are more successful with providing answers to the professor's or tutor's questions if they are familiar with the topic of the discussion. However, the research data reported that 31% of Technical College students stated that the topic of the discussion does not affect their participation in the discussion process. We assume that the reason for the above given answer could be seen in the respondents' adolescent age: it is generally accepted that an adolescent age involves psychological level dilemmas that pose the immediate need for attention. Presumably, this might be the explanation for the case when the adolescents found it pretty difficult to keep silence in the classroom, and they preferred to express their opinions spontaneously, even not being familiar with the topic under discussion.

Regarding the third question (c) set in the questionnaire, most of the respondents stated that they would still answer the professor's or tutor's questions even if they feel shy to speak. Despite that, more than a third of the learners would prefer to keep silence in such a situation. The research results demonstrate the existing correlation between the age of the respondents and their readiness to interact in the target language classroom. The Vocational School and Technical College students were more likely to overcome shyness during the lessons while 46% of the dental practitioners and 63% of the tertiary level students preferred to keep silence. This phenomenon might also be explained by the younger learners' need for attention.

So far, the discussion can draw several interim conclusions: a) silence constitutes a part of NNSs indirect communication, b) silence is the result of a personal choice, c) silence is a significant strategy of successful communication because via indirectness, it manifests a psychological readiness of an individual to share or not to share one's thoughts, ideas or assumptions.

Socio-Pragmatic Function of Silence

The social function of silence is determined by the contextual appropriacy of its use in relevant contextual situations. To study the respondents' indirectness as a pragmatic strategy via positive and negative face saving factors to avoid face threatening acts, some research questions were set, such as a) *When you have any questions and you would like to ask the speaker, but you assume that he/she will not be able to answer them, would you still ask those questions?*; b) *Do you keep silence when you are not sure whether your remarks would be relevant and appropriate?; c) Do you keep silence in the language classroom when you intend to show respect to the teacher or your groupmates?*; d) *Do you agree with the statement that being a good listener means having a balanced talk and silence?*

As regards the answers provided to question (a), most of the respondents from all the focus groups agreed that they would not ask the presenter a question if they were not sure that he/she would be able to answer it. This puts forward an assumption

that the pragmatic factor of face-saving is a significant determinant among the target language learners in Latvia. Besides, it might be presupposed that face-saving is a part of the language learners' culture, but, on the other hand, the face-saving factor also depends on an individual's background, psychological characteristics and the context of language use.

Regarding the answers offered to question (b), most of the tertiary and secondary level students and the dental professionals were inclined to observe the principle of relevance and avoid communication if they were not sure whether their remarks in the classroom were appropriately made. Thus, we could presume that the above-mentioned focus groups preferred not to lose face because of their level of education, or- because of a comparatively high social status, in the case of the dental practitioners.

On the other hand, 38% of the Vocational School students and 26% of Technical College students were less concerned about being relevant when they performed in the language classroom. This might be explained by the fact that the college students of engineering are less expected to have a good command of English as compared to the students of the University of Latvia. If the students of engineering do not observe the appropriate language use in relevant context when they use a foreign language for instrumental purposes, they can always refer to their age or to the fact that they do not specialise in languages.

Concerning the answers provided to question (c), most of the respondents admitted they would keep silence if they wanted to show respect to their professor or to their groupmates. On the other hand, nearly one third of the Vocational School students did not see any correlation between keeping silence and expressing their respect to the speaker: they held a view that respect or disrespect to the professor or to the tutor cannot be related to their wants to speak in the target language classroom.

The author of the paper has recorded several empirical observations which also prove that many students believe that they should be allowed to communicate at any time when they would like to offer a comment or would prefer to be involved in the classroom discussion because they consider that verbal communication makes an essential part of acquiring a foreign language. However, 72% of the secondary level respondents also agreed that keeping silence is a strategy of indirect communication to show respect or admiration to one's competence. Besides, it is typical of Latvian culture to keep silence rather than actively participate in the discussion, thus saving the speaker's face by not interrupting him/her. For example, "Latvian face" encodes the want and need for a positive self-image. On the other hand, "Latvian face" seemingly representing Low context culture (Hall, 1992), might be characterised as a very individualistic culture where the public self-image plays an exceptionally high role. One of the key aspects of " Latvian face" is that it does not necessarily place *self* in the most important position, according to Brown and Levinson's definition of face; but " Latvian face" encodes the behaviour to be judged or perceived highly by the community in order represent the values existing and/or being fully accepted by it.

So far, the following interim conclusions can be drawn: a) silence as a strategy of indirect communication is used in the Latvian speech community to show a respect to the speaker's competence, b) silence as a strategy of indirect communication can be used to demonstrate disagreement with what has been said, c) silence as a strategy of indirect communication is used to avoid face threatening act, especially in the cases when one's competence is under the question.

Discursive Function of Silence

According to the classification by Nakane (2007), discursive function of silence makes the frontiers of the discourse and defines the boundaries of the utterance via employing linguistic factors, for example, the prosodic features. The current research results demonstrate that the respondents, in general, assign an essential role to the linguistic factors in the target language acquisition process. Surprisingly enough, nearly a half (46%) of the dental practitioners and approximately one third of the Vocational School and Technical College students (34%), and the University of Latvia students (37%) stated that their participation in the language classroom discussions does not depend on the level of their language proficiency. The respondents admitted that they would still prefer communicating even if they did not know how to use the normative grammar rules appropriately.

Thus, it can be presumed that facing language problems does not affect the language learners' mental readiness and wish to participate in the target language classroom in general. Besides, it seems evident that the cognitive and linguistic factors are closely linked. The research observations reveal that the new generation of the language learners feel more secure in the target language classroom and are not afraid of making mistakes.

As regards the intentional keeping silence, 31% of the secondary level (the Vocational School and Technical College) students compared to 63% of the tertiary level students (the University of Latvia) and 62% of the dental practitioners prefer to keep silence if they are not sure about their pronunciation or if they face difficulties with the English phonetics in general. The research results demonstrate that prosody is one of the crucial linguistic factors that create silence in the foreign language classroom. This might be explained by bilingualism in Latvian society where many Russian origin speakers speak with a Russian accent when they speak Latvian; by the same token, the native speakers of Latvian speak with a Latvian accent when they speak Russian. It sometimes causes misunderstanding or even communication breakdown and can be considered a serious obstacle in communication with confidence. In the case of the English language, it is the English pronunciation, not grammar or vocabulary that differentiates between the native from non-native speakers of English not only in Europe but in Latvia as well.

The research has drawn the following interim conclusions up to now: a) the linguistic factors, e.g. prosody is a decisive factor to establish a positive face of the language user, b) ignorance of the linguistic factors in communication is a potential threat to the language user's face, which might result in misunderstanding, miscommunication or even in a communication breakdown.

Conclusions

1. The research has resulted in the conclusion that silence being a nonverbal instrument of indirect interaction serves as one of the face-saving strategies when NNSs in Latvia apply the English language for instrumental purposes. Thus, silence constitutes a part of NNSs' indirect communication and is the result of a personal choice. Silence is a significant strategy of successful communication because via indirectness, it manifests a psychological readiness of an individual to share or not to share one's thoughts, ideas or assumptions.

2. The action of silence is accompanied by cognitive, social, linguistic and cultural judgements that are acceptable and reasonable in a Latvia society. Silence is a very ambiguous notion. To analyse the meaning of silence in an individual's speech,

several factors have to be taken into consideration, such as the manner how a person uses the language, his/her cultural, social and emotional background. As a strategy of communicative behaviour, silence manifests itself via cognitive, social, discursive and affective functions. Not only the silence factor but also the linguistic factors play a decisive role in NNSs' communication. Thus, silence is used as one of the strategies of indirect communication in Latvia with the purpose of saving an individual's face.

3. The interpretation of silence differs from culture to culture. The manifestation of silence does not always mean that a person has nothing to say. Conversely, the meaning of silence, depending on the social context of communication, might mean: a) manner of speaking, b) social and cultural values, or habits, c) manifestation of indirectness as a communication strategy, d) benefiting from listening to others to reach full understanding of what has been stated, e) respect paid to others due to their seniority or competence, f) self-protection, g) dominance or power in the social group. Thus, the interpretation of silence and its meaning requires a culture-specific knowledge.

4. Silence as a strategy of indirect communication is used in the Latvian speech community to show respect to the speaker's competence. Typically, it is used to avoid a face threatening act, especially in the cases when one's competence is open to question. Besides, it is conventional for Latvian culture to keep silence rather than actively participate in communication. Latvian *face* encodes the want and need for a positive self-image. On the other hand, Latvian *face* seemingly representing Low Context culture might be characterised as a very individualistic culture where the public self-image plays an exceptionally high role. One of the key aspects of Latvian *face* is that it does not necessarily place *self* in the most important position, according to Brown and Levinson's definition of face; but Latvian *face* encodes the behaviour to be judged or perceived highly by the community in order to represent the values existing and/or being fully accepted by it.

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